

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 H-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9128

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE FREETOWN 0084

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SL

SUBJECT: STATUS OF MR. AND MRS. VICTOR KANU

REF STATE 007995

1. VICTOR KANU, DESPITE HIS FORMER UDP SYMPATHIES, COULD RETURN TO SIERRA LEONE WITHOUT SERIOUS PROBLEMS. AS A MATTER OF FACT HE RETURNED EARLY LAST YEAR TO RUN FOR PARLIAMENT BUT WAS UNSUCCESSFUL IN GAINING THE APC SYMBOL FOR THE ELECTION. HE UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD BE CLOSELY WATCHED BUT WITHOUT INFRINGEMENT OF HIS CIVIL LIBERTIES. KANU'S PROBLEMS IN SIERRA LEONE STEM FROM HIS MARRIAGE TO GENOVEVA AND ARE MORE SOCIAL THAN STRAIGHT POLITICAL.

2. IN THE EYES OF MANY SIERRA LEONEANS, KANU IS A BIGAMIST WHO HAS BROUGHT RIDICULE, DISHONOR AND EMBARRASSMENT TO THE NATION. MARRIED TO HIS FIRST WIFE FANNY IS A CATHOLIC CEREMONY IN PORT LOKO, HE SUBSEQUENTLY FATHERED 4 CHILDREN. HE MET AND MARRIED GENOVEVA WHILE ASSIGNED AS HIGH COMMISSIONER TO THE U.K. WITHOUT EVEN HAVING DIVORCED FANNY. FREETOWN SOCIETY WAS SCANDALIZED. PRESIDENT STEVENS REACTING TO PUBLIC PRESSURE IMMEDIATELY SACKED KANU FROM THE LONDON JOB.

3. WHEN GENOVEVA ACCOMPANIED VICTOR TO SIERRA LEONE LAST YEAR THE "GOOD LADIES" OF FREETOWN, WITH THE URGING OF ONE

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OF THE LOCAL NEWSPAPERS, BEGAN DECRYING HER PRESENCE. THE

TIMING OF HER ARRIVAL, COINCIDED WITH THE PUBLICATION IN
DRUM OF EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK SHE WROTE ABOUT HER LIFE WITH
NKRUMAH. THE ARTICLE UNFORTUNATELY DID LITTLE TO ENHANCE
HER LOCAL REPUTATION AND SHE WAS ORDERED DEPORTED AS AN
UNDESIRABLE ALIEN BY PRESIDENT STEVENS. IN SHORT, THE
GOSL WOULD NOT WELCOME THE RETURN OF GENOVEVA, ALTHOUGH
HER HUSBAND PROBABLY COULD RETURN BY HIMSELF.
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